

The latest news from the Director of Testing in the *Jagdgebrauchhundverband* (JGHV)

I have already written about temperament and evaluation of temperament at the JGHV tests in the *Jagdgebrauchshund* issues 7/2023 and 6/2023, with the request for discussion of this topic.

Unfortunately, it has been very quiet on this subject until now. I have not received any feedback from the JGHV breed clubs about the evaluation of temperament during the test and therefore I ask myself, what is the use if we have facts and data, but do not draw any conclusions regarding our breeding or if the breed clubs do not evaluate such data and use it for breeding management?

First, a few quotes that we should all think about when evaluating temperament.

- "Breeding does not forgive any mistakes" also not with temperament!
- "The rearing and training at the breeder's kennel also do not forgive any mistakes".
- This is also true with the development, shaping, and training of the puppy / dog at the buyer's or the owner's place.
- The personality and character development of our dogs lies to a very large extent in the quality of the kennel, as well as in the learning opportunities available and offered at the kennel.

The first building blocks in the life of the dog, which contribute to the shaping of the temperament, have been dealt with in previous articles. These are the building blocks genetics and rearing / shaping at the breeder.

And now let's look at the building blocks care /support /training at the dog's buyer/owner.

Here the little puppy, no matter what breed, is shaped for later life -- prepared and trained for its future life, for its hunting tasks and the behavior associated with the fulfillment of these tasks (temperament). Of course, each puppy has its own genetics, each was raised/trained and shaped differently. However, everyone wants to own a dog with the right temperament and to present this dog at the tests, often under very different testing conditions and requirements. Temperament is the behavioral state of a dog displayed at the time of encounter.

The evaluation of temperament by the JGHV Association Judges at the respective test is always only a brief snapshot in the life of a dog, but it is very decisive for breeding.

But now to the life and development of a small puppy; a small creature, from which one day a useful hunting dog will emerge.

Eight weeks with the mother, or eight weeks in the litter box / kennel, with its siblings. Eight weeks of life with the breeder – growing up, being shaped, and formed. This life is

interrupted within minutes when the puppy is picked up by the buyer, or better said, the life of the little puppy changes completely from this moment. From this moment everything is missing, everything has been taken away from him, which has shaped, formed, and protected it in the weeks before.

From this moment on, the puppy is taken to a car it does not know, hears voices it doesn't know, and smells things it has never encountered - a thousand new impressions and experiences. The protective mother and siblings are missing, and we demand that the puppy behaves calmly throughout several hours spent in the car.

Right here the further formation of the dog and its temperament begins, and this continues when the puppy arrives at its new home. The new home, the different kennel/run/back yard/possibly other dogs and other family members now shape the puppy's life.

In a flash, the little puppy has to find its way around the new environment and come to terms with the conditions in its new home, which are different for every puppy. This would not be a problem for most puppies if it weren't for the people who, through ignorance, believe that they can shape and mold this little creature in the first few hours/days/weeks as they please, instead of giving the dog the opportunity to settle into a new life and stand on its own two feet.

Yes, shape / mold and nurture its life and future, but please don't demand too much! Without doubt, there are some puppies that are not shaped / supported properly. In most cases, however, our dogs today are overburdened and are supposed to adapt to our schedule and our daily routine, which is not infrequently characterized by hustle and bustle / stress, which is clearly passed on to the dog.

On the subject of overwork: this happens very rarely to the "professionals", because they have the eye/experience/knowledge to observe the progress of the dog's development and give the dog the time to find itself. The problem is our beginners who get their first/second puppy, who often turn their own lives upside down to shape/form and nurture the dog's life and in doing so, driven by ambition, fail to see that the dog is overwhelmed and unable to cope with the environmental stimuli and its demands and becomes increasingly restless and nervous, like our children who nowadays cannot/are not allowed to shape their own lives due to school stress and deadlines. Sure, we have to take care of the dog and work with the dog but everything at the right time, when the dog has the necessary maturity and is not overwhelmed.

Let's look at the life and journey of a litter of hunting dogs. Each puppy goes to a different owner, each is placed in a different environment, each is given different hunting opportunities, and each is fostered or trained differently. Some go to an excellent small game field and experience the sight of pheasants and hare almost daily and can develop their nose, while the littermates may only see small game during the preparation for the natural ability test.

Others work at a very young age on food tracks, blood tracks, etc., others are used to hunt hoofed game at a very young age, and some have almost no hunting opportunities and spend their youth walking or in dog training courses.

However, the requirements for the evaluation of temperament at the tests are the same for everyone. It is true that we have dogs in all of the breeds that are genetically very weak in the trait "temperament" and are almost impossible to train due to their temperament, but I personally still believe that a large proportion of the dogs are badly or incorrectly trained in terms of their temperament when they are young. It is humans who, through their ambition for success, their ambition to achieve the best test results, demand too much of dogs, already in their youth.

A dog needs a lot of rest and sleep, but in many cases, we don't provide this, but rather organize the dog's life according to our schedule, our hectic pace and stress. Walks in the park, puppy school, dog school, etc., that's what the dog is offered in many cases, and this is precisely synchronized with our timetable, our schedule, shaped by our lives.

Why don't we just let the dog be a dog, let it explore its hunting world, develop its nose, get to know life as a hunting dog. Of course, this is only possible if we as owners/trainers live the hunting life ourselves, actually practice it ourselves, and this is precisely where our problem lies at the moment.

The puppy market is flooded. What is going on? Breeding with dogs (breeding animals) that should never be used for breeding due to their genetics, breeders who are not able to train a dog themselves, breeders who are not qualified to breed dogs, who lack any understanding of genetics in dog breeding.

Breeders who breed purely for profit, breed dogs that can never achieve the breeding goal of "a hunting dog" due to their performance and temperament.

If these dogs then come into the hands of a beginner, a handler, who does not train these puppies properly, does not encourage them to hunt properly but offers them nothing but walks and so on or overtaxes them, then these are the dogs that we encounter at our tests which are weak in temperament or nervous, restless dogs. The building block "genetics" lays the foundation for their temperament. If this is not intact, the other building blocks in the dog's life can no longer transform its temperament into a positive trait. However, if the building block "genetics - the temperament of the dog", which the puppy brought with it into the whelping box, is shaped and encouraged correctly, then the puppy will almost certainly become a hunting dog with a strong temperament.

In many cases, we are dissatisfied with the breed and the training of our dogs, but apart from talking about it, nothing usually happens. Why don't we demand that a breeders' seminar be made compulsory when someone begins to breed? Why do only a few breed clubs run training courses for young handlers? Once again: temperament is assessed at the tests. We must record and evaluate this data correctly. Whether the definition and evaluation of temperament at JGHV tests

(VJP/ HZP/ VGP/ VPS) will remain the same after the test regulations expire in 2027 is in our hands.

The JGHV provides the breed clubs with the data, but the breed club must evaluate it. Extensions and changes only make sense if results are available.

So please do this as a first step before we talk further about the evaluation of temperament by the Association Judges.

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From *Der Jagdgebrauchshund*, October 2023
(translation by Ken Bremer)